

WORLDWIDE EVENING OF PRAYER for REVIVAL IN THE BALKANS

CROATIA ~ BOSNIA



2011



THE BALKAN PROJECT

A vision for radically accelerated church growth

The Challenge

What do Bosnia and Croatia have in common? A dire spiritual situation. Churches are sparse, evangelical believers are few and scattered, and apathy to the gospel reigns. While the church has been working away for decades, there are less than ten thousand Christians in Croatia and less than five hundred in Bosnia! Nonetheless some church leaders and churches really **want** to make a difference and start more churches; but often their resources are low. Many feel it would take ages, even fifty years, to see new churches sprout and develop in their areas. That is too long for the eight million people in Bosnia and Croatia to wait.

ECM wants to encourage these visionary local leaders and churches in their aspirations to plant new churches and to evangelise the lost in their areas. ECM has identified three key zones where local leaders and Christians are ready to begin now. We want to help them *strategically*, encouraging them to do their part, and where they need extra resources, to come alongside them to help get the job done. As these ministries develop and the Lord brings fruit, we are praying for other "cluster church planting zones" to open up and develop throughout Bosnia and Croatia.

The Strategy

Mobilize a National Board of key visionary leaders and pastors who will envision, strategize and manage this vital initiative.

Agree local strategies with churches in these three zones that will result in a radical acceleration of church planting growth in their areas.

Recruit Brazilian and Ukrainian short-term missionaries to provide a vibrant Christian presence in these new church planting zones, alongside the national Christians.

Provide ongoing training for national leaders, short-term missionaries and anyone else involved.

The Means

Prayer: – We want to raise up 10,000 committed intercessors for this region. We want to coordinate prayer conferences, distribute prayer needs and report back with God's answers.

Missionaries: Brazil and Ukraine are areas of revival which could send out short-term teams to assist these local Balkan churches. We hope that missionaries from other countries will also join in both short and long-term.

Finances: We hold to the principle that all churches should be challenged to give sacrificially, but we also recognise that more money will be required to enact this vision than local churches can provide. Therefore we hope to raise the difference where the church has more resources.



The Next Step

You could be part of helping transform Bosnia and Croatia for Christ.

Will you join with God's people who are already working there? Will you help?



*Stephen Bell, ECM Balkans
Kent Anderson, ECM Britain*

BIBLE STUDY

Overview of Nehemiah parallel

Building in a Broken World (ch 1:3)

Captivity in the province (see Balkans)

Great distress and reproach – Jerusalem's walls broken and gates burnt.

v4 „When I heard these words I...“

...sat down

...and wept

...mourned for many days

...fasting

...praying

BEFORE THE GOD OF HEAVEN



1. Preparation time

Prayer of v5-11

- Recognises the Great God of the Heaven (v5) (Greatness and all powerfulness of God)
- Quotes God's promises and principles (scripture)
- Please... God's ear and eyes to hear and see. Answer your people's prayer! (v6)
- Nehemiah repents for the people and FOR SELF (v6-7)
(we are each responsible for non-action!)
- Quotes again God's promises and conditions of success/blessing - IF you obey my commands... (v8-9)
- The key historical moment comes; „Let your servant prosper this day“ (TODAY) (v11)

Balkan Initiative

This is the Day – Today

Coming before the King of Kings for approval, equipping (ch2)

Asking God for permission (parallel asking the king 2:1-9)

- Nehemiah tells King of his burden (broken walls of Jerusalem/see Balkans, eg statistics)
- King asks „What do you request?“ (2:4)
Perhaps God asks us, „What do you request?“

Note: Nehemia kept asking for more until his list was completed!

We, too, need to ask for the complete adequate list to finish the job!

May God open doors for the Balkan project! See what He has already done...

- ECM Brazil is firmly committed to mobilizing 12 missionaries for 2 years... and then new teams thereafter each 2 years!
- Initial financing has come to cover the vision's 1st year costs.
- Total unity from all involved with the vision – Bosnia and Croatian zones; ECM leadership.
- Strategic conference is planned with 130 people, Oct 6-9. Brazilian (and hopefully Ukrainian) leaders will come together with local leaders from the 3 zones, and church members as well.

2. Building time

„Let us rise and build together.“

„The God of Heaven will prosper us.“ (2:18,20)

In building together, everyone does his share. There is a synergy when Christians work together: Bosnians, Croatians, Brazilians, Ukrainians, British, American, Belgians, (potentially Serbs and Slovenians), etc!

All concentrate their energies according to gifting and possibilities! When we each give a hand, the Lord's hand will also be with us! (2:18)

3. Overcoming Obstacles

God's people faced many obstacles as they followed God's vision. There were attacks against God's people collectively (ch 4), against God's leader (ch 6), and even a moral attack (finances/power, egoism). „When God's people arise to build, the devil and his forces rise to destroy!“

Pray that everyone in the vision remains pure for God and experiences personal revival.

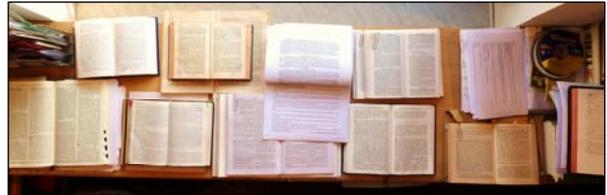
Our answer: In chapter 4:16-23

- „With Sword and Spade“ (v16)
Sword is prayer support/protection, spade is active mission work
- The Trumpet Call of Prayer, uniting us and protecting us against danger (v18-20)
„Our God will fight for us!“ (v20)
- Our attitude 100% commitment
„Ever Ready“! (4:23)

Result: In chapter 6:15

The wall was built in 52 days

Operation „50 years in 5“ (Balkan Project)



Faith: Here we must be committed to *believe* that God can do *great things even in our midst*. We must not be shackled by circumstances. The *Gospel is alive and active* (Heb 4:12), it is *powerful to save all peoples* (Rom 1:16) and it is the Lord himself who said *“I will build my church”* (Mat 16:18). Like a healthy plant, the Gospel should multiply believers and churches.

Hope: *Faith engenders hope*, and hope, when fed, watered and blessed, engenders *expectation*. We should dare to *“believe great things from God and to attempt great things for God.”* Based on faithful, even sacrificial prayer and Godly wisdom, we should look to serve other churches with *similar vision*, helping them develop their *“cluster churchplanting zones”* to God's Glory.

Love: We desire to *encourage* and *serve*. We seek to come alongside those in the churchplanting task, wherever possible sympathizing and engendering hope. Where churches are utilizing their present resources for the Lord (parable of talents Mat 25:14ff), we will seek the Lord together for practical help for them to see blessing in their ministries.

PRAYER POINTS ~ GROWTH POTENTIAL

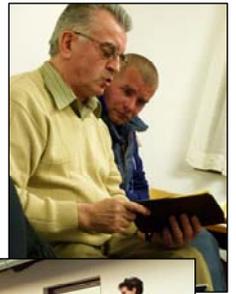
- Pray for the Balkans – for many conversions, and growth in maturity amongst believers.
- Pray the vision grows!
 - We are starting with the three church planting zones; Dubrava (Eastern Zagerb) and Varaždin from Croatia and Novi Travnik in Bosnia. Our initial prayer is for another two such zones in Croatia and a zone in both Slovenia and Serbia.
- New zones to open up
 - Please pray that further zones be identified and added to the vision.
- Praise the Lord for what He has already done in the Balkans
 - Thank God for the Christians and churches already existing, within various denominations.
- Pray for unity and vision amongst all born-again Christians and movements.
- Pray for many, many conversions. Pray that 10's of 1,000's turn to the Lord.
- Pray for Pastors, Evangelists and Denomination leaders, for encouragement and personal revival.
- Pray that 100's of new churches be planted and grow gloriously. (** In Croatia there are approximately 160 evangelical churches. In Bosnia there are far, far less.)



VARAŽDIN, CROATIA

Introduction: *Varaždin Zone*

Varaždin (population 49,000; district population 181,000) is one of the oldest cities in north Croatia, and is located 81 km (50 mi) north of Zagreb. It was the *capital* of Croatia between 1756 and 1776. It is mainly known for its baroque buildings, textiles, food and IT industry. This important, historic city has only three Bible believing churches, but holds a large Roman Catholic population and many influential RC churches.



Varaždin Church: Emmanuel Baptist church was formed in 1997, developing into the present day vibrant church of 60 or so keen Christians led and founded by Pastor Nikola Vukov and his son Jonatan, assistant Pastor. Practically all of today's congregation are first-generation Christians. As ECM came into contact with them (2009) they already had firm aspirations to plant a church in nearby Novi Marof, some 16km away. This was exactly the type of church ECM was looking for, and we are trying to assist the Varaždin churchplanters in their ministry. The official opening ceremony of the new church was in 2001 and its various ministries include: Church planting, Office for Christian counseling, Youth ministry, Sunday school, ministry to the old and sick, Prison ministry, Croatian-Bible translation project. This church is already "mother" to two other church plants:



The church plant in **Novi Marof** (population 15, 000) was started in November 2009 and is located about 22km from the city of Varaždin. *Members:* four believers and thirteen visitors interested in the Gospel; *Ministry:* Office for Christian Counseling (three days/week - mornings), a short Bible study and prayer meeting each Friday evening; personal evangelism and soul-winning in many ways, evangelism through music.

Ivanec (population 14,500) is a brand new outreach that had its first Christian meeting in February 2011. *Ministry:* Office for Christian Counseling (three days in the week - mornings), each Thursday evening there is a short Bible study and prayer meeting; personal evangelism and soul-winning, evangelism through music/gospel songs.

Vision for growth: *Vision* for other towns in Varaždin district: **Ludbreg** (population: 9000), **Lepoglava** (population: 9000), **Varazdinske Toplice** (population: 7000). We want to start churches there also.



Church planters: Nikola (pastor) and Ana; Jonatan (pastor) and Danijela; Miljenko (deacon), Neda (student), Mario, Ivica, Miroslav (pastor-assistant)

PRAYER POINTS ~ VARAŽDIN

- Pray for God's wisdom and strength that Emmanuel Baptist church (mother church) would realize a new church plant vision in Varaždin district.
- Pray for Novi Marof - that pastor Jonatan and his fellow workers win many people for Christ, and that the Holy Spirit establish and strengthen this new church – as soon as possible.
- Pray for Ivanec - that God opens the door for pastors Nikola and Jonatan and pastor-assistant Miroslav and their team to tell people the gospel message so that they might win many of them for the Lord – even this year.
- Pray that God's Spirit would move other believers in Emmanuel church and make them the soul-winners and church planters.



NOVI TRAVNIK, BOSNIA

Introduction: Novi Travnik Zone

The church in **Novi Travnik** started in 1995 as Radovan and his family became Christians just after the Bosnian war (1991-95). While many have come and gone, the church now has some 20 people of various ages attending. The church is fully committed to Biblical preaching and teaching of God's word, and also encourage fellowship with other churches. Amongst the country population of 4 million, made up of Muslims, Roman Catholic and Orthodox, the gospel is virtually unknown. Some church members are very eager to give out Bibles and other Christian literature. They have been able to publish one book, and several booklets so far, and have a desire to publish more books, CDs and DVDs as the need for Christian literature in the Bosnian language is great.

As a church they are reaching the lost with the Gospel message through the distribution of literature, over the radio, on the internet, and through personal evangelism. They hope to extend this ministry to include television as well.

Vision for growth: The church has a vision to plant churches, firstly in **Travnik** and then in **Vitez** and **Turbe**.

Travnik is a university town and is the economic, political and cultural centre of the region with a population of around 70,000.



Church planters: Radovan (elder) and Blaženka, Saša (pastor) and Ketí



PRAYER POINTS ~ NOVI TRAVNIK

- Pray for unbelievers in Novi Travnik and the surrounding area to hear and believe the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Leadership and members - for God's wisdom and courage to joyfully and faithfully share the message of the Cross and to continually grow in the true knowledge of God
- Pray for the resources and workers (native and foreign) who will carry out existent ministries such as radio, literature, Internet, etc. as well as start the new ones
- Pray that God would provide our own meeting place for the church



DUBRAVA (ZAGREB), CROATIA

Introduction: Dubrava Zone

In the summer of 2004 ECM, in partnership with GEM missionaries, approached Zagreb Radićeva church suggesting further church plants. They were enthusiastic and suggested the Dubrava, eastern Zagreb area. The Dubrava church is now all but finished, and has 44 members. Many ministries are up and running and congregations are close to 80 and growing. A Croatian leadership is the final piece left to be completed before we can say it has developed to maturity.

Leadership: May 2011 3 deacons were appointed to work alongside the 3 churchplanting elders. Pray that we can appoint and pay our own pastor.

The church has just bought its own land and building, centrally located opposite the great new mega shopping centre. This building will eventually be able to seat 200 people. Over 160,000 live in the Dubrava area of Zagreb.

FUTURE PLANS & ASPIRATIONS

The Dubrava church is keen to start other eventual churchplants and two towns have been identified.

Ministries of the church: Evangelism of Dubrava, music group, house groups in Dubrava, Sesvete, and two villages Zelina & Ivanja Reka where there have been conversions. Youth work, Sunday School, visiting the sick (especially Štef).



Vision for growth: The Dubrava church is committed to start other church plants in **Dugo Selo** (population 20,000), which is about 20km away, and where we already have 3 families, and **Sesvete** (population 60,000), some 6km distant, and where we currently have 4 families.



Church planters: Josip, Stephen and Tabita
Deacons: Davor, Danijel and Ruben
Branko – living in Dugo Selo

PRAYER POINTS ~ DUBRAVA

- Pray for many conversions, and growth in maturity amongst believers.
- Leadership – pray that the newly formed leadership will be full of faith, vitality and vision.
- New church building: Pray that the outstanding costs of 100,000 euros will be paid off as soon as possible, and that building renovations are carried out rapidly and for God's glory.
- Pray for open doors in Dugo Selo:
 - Meeting room
 - New contacts/conversions
- For determination and courage to follow all God's initiatives
- Church planting missionaries John & Lynn Lehn are on a one year deputation in the USA. Pray for them as they return to Croatia in summer of 2012 to a new ministry in Dubrovnik.



BRAZIL and UKRAINE

ECM Director for **Brazil**, Leonidas has visited Croatia and Bosnia and cried out to the Lord "So many people and so few believers!" He has committed himself to mobilizing 12 Brazilian missionaries.



Open doors were found in **Ukraine** as ECM's Ron Anderson and Stephen Bell made a visit there in May. They met with Baptist Union leaders who are excited to recruit missionaries, and with trainers from the Biblical Education by Extension (BEE) are also enthusiastic to help. Key believers Slavic and Natasha are enthusiastic to organise prayer and the mobilisation of missionaries.

Brazil and Ukraine are the main countries mobilizing missionaries for this project. However, pray that God would raise missionaries worldwide according to his pleasure.

PRAYER POINTS ~ BRAZIL

- For God's people to be called out of Brazil to Croatia and Bosnia.
- Pray that God would raise up Revival Prayer from thousands of Brazilian Christians.
- For finances for support of the Brazilian missionaries.
- Mobilization Trip, July 1-14: Stephen and Jonatan travel to Brazil to visit many churches to ask for prayer and missionaries. Pray that God would work majestically to raise up a missionary movement for the Balkan region.



PRAYER POINTS ~ UKRAINE

- Pray for the right people to come and serve. Ukrainians can learn Croatian in three months as the languages are so similar.
- For financial resources so missionaries can be sent
- Pray for the Ukrainian Baptist Union leaders, especially brother Igor who is overseeing the whole Ukrainian mobilization effort.
- For BEE Directors as they assist us in the project.
- Key believers Slavic and Natasha who are enthusiastic to organise prayer and help in mobilisation of missionaries.



PRAYER POINTS ~ BALKAN PROJECT

- Intercessory prayer on a massive scale
- God called missionaries from Brazil and Ukraine - initially 12 from Brazil and Ukraine. We are praying the first missionaries arrive in 2012.
- "Revival in the Balkans" Conference October 6-9 and Vision trip Oct 10-17:
 - Pray for great inspiration from the Lord, preaching, vision sharing, "the Glory of the Lord" amongst us.
 - That 130 people would come. Apart from Brazilian and Ukrainian church leaders & mobilizers and key representation from the initial 3 church zones, pray that enthusiastic visionary church planters from Croatia, Bosnia, Slovenia and Serbia attend. Pray the vision expands!
 - As the 13 Brazilians and 5 Ukrainians are exposed to the various church planting zones, pray the "eyes will see so the hearts can feel". Pray they receive the burden enables them to mobilize many, many missionaries from their revival countries to the needy Balkan countries.

THE BALKAN PROJECT

CONTACT INFORMATION: revivalinthebalkans@ecmi.org www.ecmi.org/revivalinthebalkans